



Getting (and Keeping) Girls Involved in Computer Science

How do you design, run and support a voluntary, outside-of-school computer science class or workshop that will engage K-12 girls? Here are some tips on how you can get girls excited to learn computing!



1 Design a class they'll want to take.

Discover what motivates them. Girls join, stay in, and leave afterschool classes for a variety of reasons; find out what those are and design your program around it as much as possible.

Create a flexible schedule. Offer different options ranging from multiple intensive classes to one-time workshops so girls do not have to choose between computing and other interests.

2 Recruit with intention.

Reach out to them. Don't wait for girls to show up—offer informational meetings and personal invitations to participate.

Think twice about WHO recruits. Make sure the person reflects the class values and goals.



3 Connect the class to what they love.

Make computing relevant. Create opportunities for them to see how computer science relates to their own interests or goals.

Make room for their friends. Leverage the importance of peers—especially for middle and high school age girls—by having activities they do in pairs and groups.





Getting Girls Involved | 6 Tips



4 Have high expectations.



Reconstruct their notion of success.

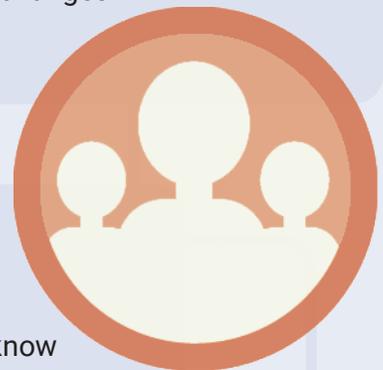
Normalize “failure” as an exciting and informative part of the learning process.

Stimulate curiosity. Challenge them to ask questions and go beyond learning the computing skills that the class teaches.

5 Keep them coming back.

Foster identity exploration. Create a space and activities for them to explore and express who they are through and with technology.

Get continuous input. Find out from them what is working and what needs improvement and consider making changes.



6 Create a community of support.

Include family members. Make sure family members know they're welcome and valued.

Connect them with a mentor. Find mentors at local colleges, universities and businesses.

Help them forge a path. Keep them engaged beyond the life of the class with community activities, internships and scholarships.